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By D. D. HOUGHTON.

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From the Richmond Dispatch.

## THE LESSON OF THE HOUR.

There are those who regard this as the most dismal and discouraging period of the whole war. The minds of many are in resonance with the sombre aspect of nature. The skies are overclouded, the trees are leafless, the birds are silent, the earth is frozen and seemingly lifeless. We do not deny that this is a serious and even solemn crisis, and we will admit that not even in the gloomy days of Fort Donelson and New Orleans were there as such grounds for grave and anxious feeling as now. But what are the causes of this solicitude? They are to be found chiefly in ourselves. It is not that the enemy has gained great military advantages; these calamities can be repaired. It is not that our soldiers have lost their ancient courage; they are the same firm and faithful warriors who have on a hundred battle fields borne the flag of the South in victory, and saved the freedom and independence of their country. But, alas! the harmony and mutual confidence that made us once a band of brothers have rudely assailed, and the demon of discord seems to have full possession of the minds of some of our public men. There are those who seem more intent upon fastening the responsibility and odium of misfortunes upon this and that public agent than upon devising means of remedy and relief. There are thousands in private life who, instead of devoting themselves body and soul to the salvation of their country, are absorbed in the pursuit of private gain, gambling wildly upon the deck of the storm-tost vessel, whilst the hurricane is howling fiercely through the shrouds and the roar of the breakers is in their ears. These are the things, more than the power of the enemy, that fill the minds of active and reflecting men with sad and serious thoughts.

We have never been the indiscriminating eulogists of men in power, nor blind to faults and errors, which they have undoubtedly committed. This journal was never, under the old Government, a party journal, and its ancient freedom from party associations is a feature in it which we do not propose to abandon. But to err is human, and we are therefore disposed to make all allowances for the men at the head of our affairs, upon whom such responsibilities have been cast as never before fell to the lot of public men on this continent, and rarely upon public men in the history of the world. The American Revolution was mere child's play compared to the gigantic struggle which is being waged on this continent. Its largest army would scarcely have formed the advance guard of one of our mighty hosts. The combined military and naval power brought against it during the whole war by Great Britain never equalled that which assailed the single town of Vicksburg. A nation has been born in a day, and, at the instant of its birth, it has been called upon to do the work of a giant. When we consider the comparative strength of the two combatants at the beginning of this war, when we bear in mind not only the disproportion of population, and of military and naval armaments, but the deplorable deficiency of mechanical skill and labor in the South, we are filled with amazement at the result which have been accomplished, and instead of despairing over the loss of so much of our territory, wonder, and thank a benignant Providence, that any of it is left. The people and the Government of the South have accomplished more in this war than any other people and Government mentioned in the annals of mankind. If we had possessed the men and means, if our people had continued patriotic, and if our rulers had been infallible and never made mistakes, the war might perhaps have been ended two years ago. But who can say that, if it had thus ended, its fruits would not have been lost? Who can say that we might not even now be considering the question of reconstruction? If we had found the independence so promptly and easily obtained, it would have been the first instance in the history of the world where a nation which has obtained its independence with facility has not lost it as easily as it was procured. We do not make these remarks to

palliate the political and military blunders which have caused our misfortunes, but to suggest to our people that Providence may have a beneficent design in protracting this struggle, and intend thereby to render our separation from the North complete and eternal.

But, admitting that our Government has committed errors, are not these errors exceptional? Are not its intentions patriotic? Can we single out in our own minds any man who would have done better than President Davis? and who, even if he had avoided the errors which he has committed, might not have fallen into others of equal magnitude? It is easy, after events have transpired, to show what ought to have been done. But, in the Confederate Government has not the gift of foreknowledge as well as infallibility, attributes which belong only to God, which of our other citizens can lay claim to these qualities? And, if the Government has been at fault, can the people show clean hands? Are they blameless? Have they preserved the purity and patriotism which animated them at the beginning of this struggle? On the contrary, has not a universal madness for greed and gain seized upon the entire population? Have not the cities run wild with speculation and extortion, and the farmers, once the proverb of disinterestedness and patriotism, demanded such enormous prices for their productions that the efficiency of the army and the welfare of the country have been both put in peril? Who, can raise his hands at this solemn hour, in all the broad limits of the country, and say he is blameless? What class of Confederates, but the army, can raise their hands to Heaven and say: Behold them! There is no blood on these hands but the blood of the enemies of the country! there is no pulsation in these hearts but that which beats for her welfare!

In the name of all that is good and holy, for the sake of our firesides and our liberties, let us banish the fell spirit of discord and stand by our country and our Government. No earthly good, nothing but evil, misfortune, ruin, can come from criminations and recriminations.—The North has hushed up its internal broils to support a man like Lincoln, who is not the choice of a majority of his people, in the work of subjugating the Confederacy. Can we not support such a man as Davis in the work of defending our hearths and homes? If the wrong man is President, who put him there? Who elevated him unanimously? Let us be charitable to the child of our own creation.—For our own part, with all his errors, we believe him one of the foremost men of the continent in administrative capacity, and no purer patriot lives. No other man has as much interest as he in faithfully performing his duty. Let us only exercise a generous confidence in him and each other, let Government and people endeavor in the future to avoid the errors of the past, and the future will be as bright and cheerful, the winter of our discontent will pass away, and a glorious spring rejoice our hearts.

## SUBJUGATION.

To the student of history, to the calm philosopher, who has pondered over the pages of historic lore—who has stood among the crumbling walls of unhappy Poland, or amid the desolate ruins of oppressed Ireland, and looked far back adown the long vista of departed years; who has seen there the untold miseries of subjugated peoples; to such a one there is something indescribably terrible in the word "subjugation." Representation in legislative halls denied, the religion of the people interdicted, schools abolished, the long established rights of primogeniture trampled under foot, education interdicted, property destroyed and wealth confiscated, children forced to testify against their parents—the celebration of religious services, the education of children, and the holding of property punishable with death. Such were some of the bitter fruits of subjugation in the conquered lands of the East. Are the Southern people ready to submit to subjugation? Forbid it, Heaven! In the language of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, are we "ready to give up house and lands, slaves and cattle, and wander homeless, to the end of the earth; to shoulder the Yankee debt of three thousand millions; to pay taxes, without the means of paying them; to make bricks without straw; to see our wives and daughters go to the kitchen and the washtub; to see our mothers serving as waiting maids to the wives of Yankee generals; to see our sons drafted into Yankee armies, and compelled to shed their blood in enforcing the Monroe doctrine against the French in Mexico; to have every newspaper in the land edited by a Yankee; every pulpit and every school filled by an Abolition fanatic; to have our children taught to detest Lee, Jackson and Beauregard as rebels; to have all

offices and occupations of honor, or of profit, monopolized by Yankee swindlers and accursed Southern partners, who have sold their souls for gain; to adopt an anti-slavery Bible and anti-slavery God; to welcome Free Love as a new dispensation; to see all traces of Southern ancestry and heritage obliterated, all families scattered, and all social institutions destroyed; to forget that ladies and gentlemen existed; to forego the pride of a good name and an unsullied reputation, and to worship an aristocracy of wealth acquired by cheating?"

No! a thousand times no! Fight on, fight ever, until independence is achieved, or the last drop of Southern blood has been spilt in the endeavor to obtain it. But we are not as those who are without hope. Believing in the goodness and justice of God, we have every reason to hope for success. Let us, then, hope for independent peace, pray for independent peace, and fight for independent peace—remembering that,

"Freedom's battle once begun,  
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,  
Though baffled oft, is ever won;"

remembering that if we are but true to ourselves—that if we are worthy of the liberty for which we are struggling—a kind and just Providence will surely give us the victory. Let us, then, loathe and spurn all idea of subjugation, or submission to Yankee rule, and renew upon the altar of our country our vows to conquer our independence, or perish with the temple of our liberty.

**NEW ENTERPRISE.**—The Eagle Mills have determined to establish a free school for the poor of our city. The board to which they have entrusted its management consists of Rev. Mr. Key, Messrs. Wise and Wilcox, and Dr. Woodruff, with Rev. Mr. Devotie as president.

For temporary purposes the Methodist church near the Palace wells has been secured, and Mr. Startwell, well known among our citizens as an able and attentive instructor, has been employed as teacher, and the school will be opened next Monday week. Here is an opportunity for all the poor youths of our city to be educated, and then become ornaments to any society or community.

This praiseworthy scheme, we understand, originated with Messrs. Gunby, Brown and Young, gentleman of extensive means and large hearted, full-souled philanthropy. This school is the most lasting monument which could be erected to their memories—one that will endure, while proud mausoleums crumble into dust.

The Mills, as soon as possible, will erect a suitable building.—*Columbus Sun.*

**FRANKLIN PIERCE.**—The movement in the Northwest, seconded at Washington, to bring out ex-President Pierce in opposition to the Black Republicans for the Presidency, is the most hopeful sign of the returning reason of Northern Democrats.

Gen. Pierce is one of the very small number of Northern public men—we can only name two others, Thomas Seymour, of Connecticut, and Ben. Wood, of New York—who have never wavered on the question of the constitutionality and wickedness of coercion of the Southern States. They have never given into the shams policy of what are termed War Departments, and never prated of the farce of carrying on the war for the restoration of the Union, and of a constitutional war. They are for peace; immediate and unconditional, and for letting the Southern States decide for themselves upon the question of restoration or separation.

The best God speed to this movement. There is peace in no other direction and the Northern friends of Northern as well as Southern liberty, must see that there is no other road to peace—that it is impossible for the South to dream of laying down its arms or of treating for terms of peace so long as the powers of the Federal Government are in the hands of deadly enemies who have sworn our destruction, and devoted our liberty and property to ruin, and our civil and military leaders to imprisonment, banishment or the scaffold, according to the tender mercies of such philanthropists as Lincoln, Chase, Lovejoy and Butler. We repeat, God speed the movement. It is the first yet made in the right direction.

*Mobile Advertiser.*

Woman is like ivy—the more you are ruined the closer she clings to you.

Some crusty bacheior, who should be compelled to inhabit the bleak world of bachelor-dom alone, adds:

Ivy is like women—the closer it clings to you the more you are ruined. Poor rule that don't work both ways.

**A YANKEE ACCOUNT OF THE TREATMENT OF CONFEDERATE PRISONERS.**—The *Chicago Times*, give the account which follows of the treatment of our soldiers at Camp Douglas. We give the paragraph in full:

Reports have been circulated round the city during the past few days to the effect that the prisoners in Camp Douglas were being shot down promiscuously and remorselessly by the soldiers of the guard, without real cause. It was not for some time possible to trace these rumors to any reliable source or to ascertain the exact extent to which these abuses have been carried. A little inquiry has, however, developed the fact that, whether the reports be true or not, there is at least very strong reason to believe them so.

It is said that Col. D. Land has issued orders that if any prisoners shall fail to comply instantly with any requirement of a soldier belonging to the guard he shall be shot down. This regulation may be necessary enough in its strict acceptance as requiring obedience to orders of a disciplinary character, but is exceedingly liable to abuse when the guarding soldier is made the judge of what constitutes an act of insubordination, and is permitted to revenge non-compliance with commands emanating from himself and not from the officer in command. It is charged that the abuse of this power has not been unfrequent. It is said, for instance, that about four weeks ago one of the prisoners was kindling his fire, which act he had a right to perform, when one of the guard accosted him with, "Here, what are you doing there?" The prisoner replied, "That is not your business," when the guard instantly drew his musket and shot the fellow dead. It is said also that a mulatto boy, a servant of one of the Confederate captains, and, of course, a prisoner of war, who was well known to have a pass to go anywhere within the lines, was walking inside the guard limits about a day after the above occurrence, when the guard commanded him to halt. He did not stop, and was instantly killed by a bullet.

It is also charged that, at the time the discovery was made of an attempt on the part of some of the prisoners to escape, a party of three or four hundred was huddled together and surrounded by a guard; that one of them was pushed by a comrade and fell to the ground, and that instantly the unfortunate man was shot, and that three or four others were wounded. It is further stated that it is no uncommon thing for a soldier to fire on the barracks without any provocation whatever, and that two men were thus shot while sleeping in their bunks a week or two ago, no inquiry being made into the matter. No court martial has been held, no arrest has been made, though within the past month ten or twelve of the prisoners have been thus put out of the way. Another instance need only be given: One of the prisoners asked the guard for a chew of tobacco, and he received the bayonet in his breast without a word.

If the above reports are true, a reform might be instantly instituted. And if they are untrue then the public will be pleased to be informed of that fact. It is difficult to believe them otherwise than untrue; yet, if the charges shall be substantiated, the very occurrences specified above, shocking and shameful as they may be, will nevertheless be not a whit more disgraceful to the American people than many other cruel and atrocious deeds exacted during this unhappy war by the armies of both sections.

**THE NEXT SPRING.**—The Yankee journals boast that they will give the rebels a final quietus in the spring. Their preparations are to be on a gigantic scale. They proclaim that they are piling up stores and other necessaries for Grant's army almost as high as Lookout Mountain. Goliath, of Gath, was not more confident of smashing to atoms the ruddy stripling that disputed his progress than the backers of Grant are of his annihilating the rebellion in the spring campaign.

We are not disposed to underrate the magnitude of the solemn crisis which is at hand.—A colossal danger threatens us, but we must meet it like men. We must emulate the Yankees in the foresight, the calculation, the system, the untiring labor of preparation for the decisive hour. If we do this, if we leave nothing to chance, if we are as circumspect and prudent as we are brave and determined, then, with the blessing of God, the huge struggle of next spring will break the backbone of this war and inflict a fatal paralysis upon the energies of the United States. We look forward with hope, with confidence, with a firm belief that every man in the Confederacy will gird up his loins for one grand and crowning effort for the salvation of his country.—*Richmond Dispatch.*